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**OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES
OF FEEDER PIGS**

(Title 7, Ch. 1, Pt. 53, Sections 53.150, 53.151, 53.158 and 53.159 of the Code of Federal Regulations)

The following is a reprint of the Official United States Standards for the Grades of Feeder Pigs promulgated by the Department of Agriculture under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (60 Stat. 1087; 7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.), as amended. The standards are reprinted as adopted effective January 1, 1966.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARDS

In 1940, tentative standards for grades of feeder pigs were developed and published by the Department of Agriculture in Circular No. 569, "Market Classes and Grades of Swine." These tentative standards were never revised nor were they promulgated as official standards.

The tentative standards served as the basis for Federal and Federal-State livestock market news reports on feeder pigs.

Official standards for grades of feeder pigs were proposed by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1965. Slight revisions were made in the proposed standards before they were promulgated as the Official United States Standards for Grades of Feeder Pigs, effective January 1, 1966.

APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

The official standards for swine developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture provide for segregation first according to intended use--slaughter or feeder--then as to class, as determined by sex condition, and then as to grade, which is determined by the apparent relative excellence and desirability of the animal for a particular use. Differentiation between slaughter and feeder swine is based solely on their intended use rather than on specific identifiable characteristics of the swine. Slaughter swine are those which are intended for slaughter immediately or in the near future. Feeder swine are those which are intended for slaughter after a period of feeding.

CLASSES

There are five classes of slaughter and feeder swine. Definitions of the respective classes are as follows:

BARROW.--A barrow is a male swine castrated when young and before development of the secondary physical characteristics of a boar.

GILT.--A gilt is a young female swine that has not produced young and has not reached an advanced stage of pregnancy.

SOW.--A sow is a mature female swine that usually shows evidence of having reproduced or having reached an advanced stage of pregnancy.

BOAR.--A boar is an uncastrated male swine.

STAG.--A stag is a male swine castrated after development or beginning of development of the secondary physical characteristics of a boar. Typical stags are somewhat coarse and lack balance--the head and shoulders are more fully developed than the hindquarter parts, bones and joints are large, the skin is thick and rough, and the hair is coarse.

GRADE FACTORS

The grade of a feeder pig is determined by evaluating two general value-determining characteristics--its logical slaughter potential and its thriftiness.

The logical slaughter potential of a thrifty feeder pig is its expected slaughter grade at a market weight of 220 pounds after a normal feeding period. In these feeder pig standards, logical slaughter potential is determined by a composite appraisal of the development of the muscular system and the skeletal system. Both of these factors have an important effect on the development of lean and fat as the animal grows and fattens, and therefore, on the expected slaughter and carcass grade.

Thriftiness in a feeder pig is its apparent ability to gain weight rapidly and efficiently. Size for age, health, and other general indications of thriftiness are considered in appraising the thriftiness of feeder pigs.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The standards provide for five grades of feeder pigs--U.S. No. 1, U.S. No. 2, U.S. No. 3, Medium, and Cull--corresponding in name to the five grades for slaughter swine and pork carcasses. The No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 grades include all pigs which are thrifty. Differentiation between the No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 grades is based entirely on differences in logical slaughter potential. Feeder pigs in the No. 1 grade have sufficient muscling and frame to reach a market weight of 220 pounds with near the minimum degree of finish required for the production of cuts with acceptable quality characteristics. Feeder pigs in the No. 2 and No. 3 grades usually have progressively less muscling and less frame and are expected to have progressively more finish when marketed at 220 pounds. The Medium and Cull grades include only pigs which lack thriftiness. Differentiation between these grades is based entirely on differences in degree of unthriftiness.

Most feeder pigs are marketed when relatively young and before reaching a weight of 125 pounds. At this age, sex condition exerts

little influence on the basic factors determining the feeder grade. Therefore, these standards are equally applicable for grading barrow, gilt, and boar pigs, although it is recognized that sex condition may influence the market price in some instances. It is assumed that boar pigs will be castrated prior to developing the secondary physical characteristics of a boar. Sows, stags, and mature boars are seldom used as feeder animals, and these standards do not apply to those classes.

Only one combination of muscling and skeletal characteristics is described in the standards for the No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 grades. However, it should be recognized that pigs with thicker muscling and less frame or those with thinner muscling and greater frame than described in each of these grades also may be eligible for that grade. Since no attempt is made to describe the numerous combinations of characteristics that may qualify a feeder pig for a specific grade, making appropriate compensations for varying combinations of characteristics requires the use of sound judgment.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF FEEDER PIGS

U.S. NO. 1

Feeder pigs in this grade near the borderline of the U.S. No. 2 grade are slightly long in relation to width and have moderately thick muscling throughout. Thickness of muscling is particularly evident in moderately thick and full hams and shoulders. The back usually appears slightly full and well-rounded. They usually present a well-balanced, stylish appearance. Feeder pigs in this grade are expected to produce U.S. No. 1 grade carcasses when slaughtered at 220 pounds.

U.S. NO. 2

Feeder pigs in this grade near the borderline of the U.S. No. 3 grade are slightly short in relation to width and have only slightly thick muscling throughout. The hams and shoulders are slightly thick and full and the back usually appears moderately full and thick. Feeder pigs in this grade are expected to produce U.S. No. 2 grade carcasses when slaughtered at 220 pounds.

U.S. NO. 3

Feeder pigs typical of the No. 3 grade are short and have rather thin muscling throughout. The hams are thin and rather flat, particularly in the lower parts toward the shanks. The back usually appears full and thick and the width at the topline usually is greater than at the underline. Feeder pigs in this grade are expected to produce U.S. No. 3 grade carcasses when slaughtered at 220 pounds.

MEDIUM

Feeder pigs in this grade near the borderline of the Cull grade usually are small for their age and appear unthrifty. They often have a rough, unkempt appearance indicating the effects of disease

or poor care. The hams and shoulders usually are thin and flat and taper toward the shanks. The back is thin and lacks fullness. Pigs in this grade near the borderline of the U.S. No. 1, U.S. No. 2, and U.S. No. 3 grades are slightly small for their age and appear slightly unthrifty. It is recognized that Medium grade feeder pigs will produce No. 1, No. 2, or No. 3 grade carcasses when slaughtered at 220 pounds provided their unthrifty condition is corrected.

CULL

Feeder pigs typical of this grade are very deficient in thriftiness and growthiness and often appear stunted or diseased. Hams and shoulders usually are very thin and flat and taper toward the shanks. They are narrow over the top and the back is thin and often slopes away from the center.